

National Youth Justice Conference, June 20-21, 2018

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This Information Sheet highlights learning points from the National Youth Justice Conference workshops. Further information about the conference presentations can be accessed [here](#).

Principles of Good Transitions Rebecca Williams, [Scottish Transitions Forum](#)

The Scottish Transitions Forum is a free membership organisation open to those committed to improving transitions for young people with additional support needs. This informative workshop defined transition as “...the period when young people develop from children to young adults. This is not a single event, such as leaving school, but a growing-up process that unfolds over several years and involves significant emotional, physical, intellectual and physiological changes”. The workshop highlighted that rather than being a linear process, one transition often involves multiple transitions that affect each other. The potential challenges of transitions and what can assist have been well established (e.g. [Facing The Future, 2017](#)), and as a result workshop participants were able to hear about the [seven principles of good transitions](#). A [flowchart](#) was shared which simplifies the range of legislative provisions that also influence transitions as well as information on the [Transition Fund](#), introduced by the Independent Living Fund Scotland to help support disabled people going through important transitional stages to live independently in their communities.

Inclusion Support and Youth Justice Collaboration Steven Jewell and Jim Paul, Dumfries and Galloway

School inclusion is extremely important in achieving positive outcomes for children. This workshop shared the positive initial findings from a collaborative approach to school inclusion in Dumfries and Galloway. Their early and effective intervention approach involves basing youth justice workers in a high school for part of the week. During this time, the youth justice workers offer consultation to education staff and support to pupils as requested. In addition, they deliver a group work package that includes elements such as building resilience, confidence and emotion management. This group work is targeted at children in S1 who have displayed difficulties in managing their behaviour but who have not engaged in offending behaviour. Initial data indicates patterns of reducing behavioural difficulties and increasing achievement. Further testing of this approach is planned in Dumfries and Galloway.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” Ross Gibson and Kate Black, [Interventions for Vulnerable Youth Project](#)

Communicating risk formulation to children often poses a challenge to practitioners. Speech, language and communications needs can make such a task more difficult, whilst the length of the reports are such that young people may find them intimidating. However, the need to share one’s concerns and views about sensitive aspects of a child’s life is both significant and necessary in order to act in an ethical manner. This workshop considered the use of narrative letters as a means of facilitating conversation in a compassionate, child friendly and balanced view. Underpinned by research from the field of cognitive behavioural therapy, the presenters demonstrated the application of a letter that sought to test out hypotheses of risk, whilst reflecting positive developments that both mitigate against risk and develop resilience,

particularly during difficult stages of a young person's life.

“Anyone can be an astronaut!” Supporting young people at home so they can reach for the stars at school... Yvette Odonnel, [Includem](#)

Recognising the impact that home life and relationships have on educational engagement and attainment, this workshop described Includem's service to support children beyond the school day to help unlock their potential. Recognising the impact that home life and relationships have on educational engagement and attainment, this workshop described Includem's service to support children beyond the school day to help unlock their potential. The service involves engaging children and their families, utilising a relationship based model, and supporting them in their home/community environment. The support is tailored to the family and can be intensive depending on the family's needs. A 24/7 phone line is provided where children and families can request assistance from members of the team that they know. Through provision of this support, the aim is that families work towards independence where the support of services is no longer required. Plans to evaluate the outcomes of this service are underway.

Access to Industry's employability hub within Polmont Adele Hill and Paul McCrudden, [Access to Industry](#)

Employment is a key protective factor in desistance ([Weaver, 2018](#)). As a result, HMYOI Polmont has funding for an employability coordinator to improve the employability of all young people in custody by offering support and establishing an employer forum to build relationships and buy in from opportunity providers. This workshop highlighted the challenges and opportunities of the Hub, which offers young people the opportunity to gain recognised skills and qualifications, CV development and the production of disclosure letters. The challenges of having this within the custodial environment include: the prison regime and environment; limits to the time available to work with young people, and competing demands; matching the skillset and services offered to the real world of work, with digital exclusion a significant issue; complexity of need and the inability to focus purely on employability as this is impacted by wider factors such as housing; disclosure of criminal records; and the need for societal and cultural shift in seeing young people's potential. Relationships, flexibility, holistic and individualised support, partnership working and sharing resources were highlighted as key factors in addressing challenges, with 14 employers currently committed to working with young people in Polmont and 12 external training providers offering opportunities.

Brothers and Sisters: How separation affects transitions in the short and long term Ruairi Hunter, Shannon Conway and Julie Anne Barr, [Staf](#)

[Connecting Voices](#) is a partnership project delivered in East Ayrshire by Staf (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum). The project uses youth work techniques to allow young people to share their views and discuss their experiences in a safe way. This workshop shared the findings of some research Connecting Voices carried out this year in East Ayrshire. During the workshop, participants heard directly from young people about the impact sibling separation had on them. Participants were given case scenarios to think about the impact separation would have and to challenge thinking around how we can support young people to stay together and to stay in touch with family members both in the short and long term. This was a very thought provoking session, which allowed participants the opportunity to hear directly from those affected and to share views and ideas around what changes to practice could be made.

Trying different approaches to support our most vulnerable young people who display distressed behaviour Keith Webster and Stuart Kelly, Falkirk High School

The 'Whole School Approach' in Falkirk High was developed with the aim of reducing exclusions and improving attendance and attainment for young people who are struggling due to the difficulties they face. The journey has involved changing the provision, capacity and mind set across the school community, based on principles of fairness, inclusion and compassion. The workshop included 'Talking Head' film clips of young people and staff sharing personal reflections on different aspects of the journey including achievements, barriers and hurdles. The key elements included a sophisticated staff development programme with a focus on resilience and professional/practice enquiries, extending support networks and mechanisms for young people at an early stage when difficulties come to light, and changing the provision in terms of curriculum and interventions. Attendees left with key messages about the importance of language in culture change, starting with developing everyone's understanding of young people in difficulty by talking about 'distressed' rather than 'challenging' behaviour. The initial aims are now being realised with school exclusions a third less frequent than in 2015/16.

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